

ELLSBERG: By December of this year, the Congress of the United States will have been appropriating taxpayers' money to spend, in part, ^{to} supporting a war in Indochina for 25 years -- a quarter of a century.

Last May marked the 20th anniversary of the month in which the Executive asked Congress and Congress supplied funds for use directly in the war in Indochina. Each year then of these last 20 years, money ~~from the producers, friends and individuals of the Congress~~ has been appropriated by Congress for napalm, for hiring Vietnamese soldiers (initially to fight against their own independence), ^{and for} planes and other equipment in that war.

That means that a young man who was born in that month of May, 1950, would now, this year, be able to vote on these issues, even without the new voting regulations reducing the voting age.

But for each year of his life, his parents would have paid taxes, voted by the Congress, to support that war and for each of the last three years he would have faced a serious possibility of being drafted for service in that war, something which no Frenchman in the eight years of the French war, supported by us against the independence of Vietnam, ever had to face.

One Vietnamese who objected strongly during that first Indochina war to the use of American-produced and supplied napalm

against his countrymen who were fighting for their independence, was a patriot and a nationalist named Ngo Dinh Diem.

Later, thanks to us, he became the ruler and eventually the dictator of South Vietnam. In that role he asked for American napalm against his countrymen. He got it. He also, for the first time, asked America to supply defoliants and herbicides and Congress voted the money for that.

The taxpayers and Congress giveth. The Executive giveth and the Executive taketh away. When it came time to discard Ngo Dinh Diem, the signal given to the plotters in Vietnam of U.S. support for the coup in 1963 was that the Executive should suspend payment on the Commodity Import Program which supported their entire military budget:

Again, these were funds that had always been supplied by Congress. ^P When the Executive did so in the fall of 1963, as the Pentagon Papers show, the coup plotters then benefited from the realization of every officer in the Vietnamese army that he faced a total loss of U.S. support for the military budget. That is, their salaries ^{and} to pay for their troops would be cut off unless they joined the coup opposing Diem. They did so. Diem was assassinated. This act of liberation of the Vietnamese people that we had supported so long was so popular that the man who led that coup is today widely recognized as the most popular and respected figure in the Vietnamese armed forces.

He is a man so politically significant that he/^{could} run against the incumbent president, who benefits from all the advantages of U.S. support now, and would, in fact, be a sure winner this year in the campaign were it not for the fact that it is against U.S. policy that he should ^{win.} run. So his chances for ^{winning} running are, in fact, minimal.

to editor:

Will date of
this statement

be clear?

Should there
be an editors
note on this

later dropping
out, charges
US/Vietnam
collusion?

One more anniversary -- one that's almost the first. Last December, Congress was asked to vote upon a supplemental appropriation that would extend and support the use of American ^{firepower} fighter power in Cambodia as well as Laos.

You heard from Fred Branfman who knows as well as anyone that that ^{firepower} fighter power is not for the ^{benefit of the} people of Laos. What ^{it has} is meant for the people of Cambodia -- where the population is little under seven million -- is over a million refugees since our invasion with the South Vietnamese in 1970. [Now about two million, according to the Kennedy Subcommittee on Refugees.]

Two Senators voted against that supplemental appropriation, Gore and Goodell, both lame ducks in part because they had incurred the hostility of the administration for their act^s of opposition to the war.

But that number of Congressmen was about the ~~right proportion~~ the same proportion that had always opposed appropriation bills year after year.

We are honored by the presence of one of the two Senators -- Senator Gruening -- who voted against the Tonkin-Gulf resolution, particularly voted against its hasty passage, and what we now can see from the Pentagon Papers, its deceptively manipulated passage at that time.

Now this kind of a history that I have just given is ~~one that~~
~~I would say~~ is in language that would have been recognized only three
months ago as emotional, biased, fanatic, extreme. I know that
because I know that I was called all of these things ^{when} if I said any-
thing approaching this over the last couple of years since I first
read the Pentagon Papers and began using those terms.

There are still columnists and politicians who will use
those terms about a description of our Congressional involvement
and what it has meant. But I take it as a sign, when I hear that,
of someone who hasn't yet read the Pentagon Papers.

I know how hard it is to get anyone to read them. No one
knows better than I. They are very dull. They are boring. They
are numbing to read. I happen to think there is no substitute
for reading very large portions of those papers. I would have to
say, unfortunately, much larger than is available even now. There
is a Bantam book, thanks to The New York Times, which does give
citizens and Congressmen, and for that matter, uninformed people
in the Pentagon, a chance to inform themselves in a far greater
way than they ever have. I/hope that the Congressmen will under-
take to insure, and they have the power to do this, that the entire
record is available -- not a selected part, not a small bit, but
the entire 7,000 pages which for all its limitations is a massive
beginning on the honest history of the war.

→ To editor: (will there be a note, here or elsewhere, on the
Grand edition and the G. P. O. edition: (neither of which
includes the 4 volumes on negotiations, which are in the hands
of Congress).]

I think that measures to make that available to Congressional staff as well as to the Congressmen themselves and ultimately the public are very strongly to be hoped for. Nevertheless, this history does show very clearly that the Executive is on fairly strong grounds when it claims that it has had the supporting collaboration of Congress in waging this war over the last 20 years.

Many Congressmen have honorably spoken out strongly and truly about the war, but so long as they themselves -- and this is true of ^{most} many of them -- vote for the appropriations, they have given the President all that he needs from them to help wage the war.

They have given ^{their} him the collaboration and their cooperation and they are accomplices in the war, as each President has pointed out.

On the other hand, the responsibility of those lied to is not the same. It is not as great as the responsibility of those doing the lying. Even among those who have been deceived, ^{who} which range in some degree from citizens to the President, the responsibilities aren't the same.

Among those lied to, ~~as I say~~, there are differences of degree of responsibility correspondent to ^{ing} ~~their~~ ^{and varying} power to have known ^{or} and found out the truth, ~~and the responsibility of citizens to~~ ^{Congressmen have} used to the full ^{The question must be faced, for example, whether} ~~their~~ ^{al powers} use the power of the Constitution to find it out and inform themselves.

to the Pentagon Papers,
From now on, thanks even to the Bantam book that I hope
will ultimately be in the Record and which is available to the
Congress, any Congressman who remains ignorant of the data and
information in those studies takes on himself a very heavy in-
dividual responsibility for his own ignorance and his own decisions
that may follow from it.

The same is true for the administration, of course, for
each/^{day}that it persists in denying this information to the American
public. But supposing this responsibility -- to inform themselves --
is faced as it has not been in the past. What can anyone do about
it? Specifically, what can a Congressman do about it? They know
the details of what is open to them far better than I.

But I do want to suggest a standard by which Congressmen's
efforts can be judged. One thing weighing on the Congress this
year, as in the past, is the fact that if they ~~are to use~~ their
power to end the war, ~~what can Congress do about this war.~~ It ^{they}
can end it, ~~in a number of ways.~~

The inhibition against using that power has been, ^{(that the President, as he} ~~as the~~
~~President~~ has made clear, ~~that he~~ will not share that responsibility
with them. To me, the meaning of the support for the McGovern-
Hatfield amendment and others, such as it has been, is that many
Congressmen are willing to share that responsibility for helping
to get the President out.

But, as I say, the President has made it clear they will have to fight ^{him, to get us out.} They will have to take all the responsibility. Senator Stennis spoke for many Congressmen. He said what was on their minds. He warned his fellow Congressmen against a bill that would take upon Congress the sole responsibility for ending the war by ending appropriations and, thus, ^{take} the responsibility for any bad consequences that may follow.

God knows there is no guarantee that only good consequences will follow from that act either in this country or in Vietnam. So he urged his fellow Congressmen not to take upon themselves the recrimination that would follow from that responsibility.

That is humanly understandable, but to dodge that responsibility is to accept the responsibility for continuing the war. ~~The standards, I think, by which~~ A Congressman's willingness to fight the President ^{on this matter} ~~could be measured~~ ^(his efforts) ~~would be~~ to cut off appropriations; to move where appropriate in terms of violations of international law and the Constitution towards impeachment of various officials who may be found unequivocally to have lied or to have mis-used their Constitutional power; or to file suits against these officials, as I am glad to see some Congressmen have done; ^{to obstruct Executive-desired legislation, appropriations, or appointments not only by adverse votes but by such means as filibuster if necessary, to obtain Executive compliance; and to support legislation to prevent the Constitutional} A Congressman must be willing to risk the loss of votes; ^{(P) To do such things,} he must be willing to risk the loss of financial support and bad columns in newspapers. He will certainly lose points within the club, as Senator Gravel did when he tried to inform the American role of Congress in the making of foreign policy and in war powers.

people of the contents of the Papers.

He will be embarrassed. He will be criticized and laughed at. Nothing is more ominous to a politician, I think. He may lose his job. Is it reasonable to ask him to take those risks in this case?

I think the standard that each individual and specifically Congressmen should take in judging whether they personally have done enough is set by two types of behavior that are familiar to all of us.

The first is the standard of the three million men who have answered the call of Congress and the Executive and risked their bodies and their lives in the paddies, jungles and cities of South Vietnam.

How many of them have paid for that willingness with their arms and their legs? That is a statistic, I understand, Congress has not yet been able to pry out of the Department of Defense, which apparently believes the American public has no need to know how many of their sons have suffered in that way.

But we do know that 55,000 have given their lives and hundreds rest in foreign prisons because they felt it was their responsibility to answer the demands of Congress and the President.

Secondly, there are several hundred prisoners of war in this country -- young men, who before they had ever heard of the Pentagon Papers, instinctively knew it was not right for them to go to war; that, in fact, it was their duty as Americans, as free responsible human beings, not to collaborate but to resist that

war; and they are in prison for it today while thousands of others are in jeopardy for that resistance.

At least one of them is known to many of the Congressional sponsors of this conference. His name is Vincent McGee and he used his last months while the Supreme Court was considering his case for draft resistance, to work for Business Executives' Move for Peace, working on the Hill to inform Congressmen and encourage them to resist the war. That is how they know him.

He got married while waiting for the Supreme Court decision a couple of months ago. He is now in Lewisburg Prison as of a few weeks ago on counts that include not having a draft card.

He took half of his draft card and burned it in April of 1967 and sent the other half to Lyndon Johnson. I asked him a month ago, while he was waiting to go to prison, why/^{he} had chosen that form of activity rather than simply using the electoral process; why he had dramatically chosen to expose himself to prison in order to express his deep moral conscientious feelings against the war.

He told me something very interesting. I asked him how old he was in 1967. He was 24 years old. I said, "That means you were 21 in 1964." He said, "Yes, that was the first year I voted. I voted for Lyndon Johnson as a candidate that would get us out of this war and would be for peace."

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"The only President that I have ever known, that I have ever voted for is the man who told me that, and by 1967 it was clear to me that voting alone was not all that I could do nor all that I must do to end this war."

It is not all that those who know Vinnie McGee in Congress can do. I think the answer then to the question of what is one's responsibility and how ingenious and how resolute should one be in opposing the war is simply this:

What ^{could} can you do to resist the war? ^{if you were} Are you willing to risk the loss of your job or your career or influence or access to power ^{for} for people? ~~No~~ No one here will be asked to give his life opposing the war, as you ^{brothers} brothers and sons have been asked or ~~perhaps~~ ^{perhaps} will be asked ~~perhaps~~ ⁱⁿ to give ⁱⁿ pursuing it.

~~That is not the issue.~~ ^{That is not the issue} ^{for you} That is not the issue for me or any one here. But there are people here ^{who} young enough to have relatives ^{or friends} who have chosen to go to jail in opposing it. When it comes to much lesser things like the embarrassment Senator Gravel experienced, I know that he felt that was well worth it and that he would feel ^{a great deal more} ~~a great deal more~~ ^{trouble than that would be} ~~was~~ worth it.

Hence, I am speaking here in a real feeling of hope that Congressmen, like other citizens, when they have the information on which to make a responsible choice, will do that and will use their power to end this war.